

A CHRISTMAS STORY BY PETER M'ARTHUR.



ted that her most striking peculiarities were due to this accident of birth. Of course it had nothing to do with her unlikeness to other girls in being more beautiful than any of them. but it certainly was the cause of a strange moroseness that seemed to overwhelm her every year when her birthday came around. It was first noticed when she was a child, and wise people said she would outgrow it, but they were mis-taken. Every year her birthday brought a period of discontent, and because of a strain of Scotch reticence in her nature she would not explain what was weighing on her mind. It is true that as she grew older she changed somewhat, but it was in a way that made this peculiarity more marked. When she was old enough to have admirers, it was noticed that she almost invariably broke off with them at Christmas, and when asked to explain her conduct she quoted from an ancient ballad she had read at the seminary:

Who on Christ his day is borne Shall rede aright both love and scorne.

"Because I was born on Christmas," she used to say, "I have a power to know which of my friends are true and which are false, but if I explain this power to any one I shall lose it."

Of course this sounded very absurd in the last years of the nineteenth century, but it was finally demonstrated her power had a thoroughly resonable foundation. But it compelled her to weed down her friends and admirers to a pitifully small group and might have destroyed her life's happiness when the real Prince Charming came to woo but for the fact that Cupid always looks after his own.

From the time she was 17 till she was 22 Jean dismissed from one to a dozen admirers every Christmas without explanation, and people were beginning to believe that she was doomed to die an old maid. In the November of her twentieth year she became engaged to an attractive young man, and some thought the spell was broken, but she dismissed him so contumeliously at Christmas and with such outspoken scorn that it became a saying among her friends that she would never get married until a young man appeared who could hold her fancy through the Christmas season. She admitted the truth of this statement and continued to wait the coming of the right man.

When Harry Finlay came to the town to act as cashier in the local bank, he Immediately struck up a warm friendship with the beautiful but decidedly peculiar girl. Well meaning friends warned him of her Christmas habits, but in his eyes the touch of mystery only added to her charm. He paid court to her ardently and with such success that toward the end of autumn she consented to be his wife. But when he asked that she wait for a year until he received an expected promotion to the position of manager she showed signs of uneasiness, and when, in addition, he asked her to



WELL MEANING FRIENDS WARNED HIM OF

HER CHRISTMAS HABITS. be patient with him until he could afford to get her such an engagement ring as he thought should be placed on her finger she was almost moved to tears but would not explain why. The truth was that she reciprocated his love so warmly that she would gladly have married him out of hand and avoided the Christmas test, but now he was laying himself open to it. Indeed he was approaching it with even worse prospects than any of his predecessors. Harry suspected the cause of her uneasiness

admirers had fallen she could not do so, secret. She did promise, however, that if he escaped the danger she would ex-

plain everything to him after Christmas. "If you love me truly and are the noble, generous soul I believe you to be, there is no danger," she said to him. "I am not so sure of my nobility and

generosity," he said, "but I am very sure that I love you, and I will walk as circumspectly as I can."

As the Christmas season came around Jean's anxiety increased; but, like the healthy, big hearted soul he was, Harry practically dismissed the whole matter from his mind and went his way as if he were not undergoing a test on which his whole future happiness depended.

As the little jeweler in the town did not have a very large assortment of presents | so for him. When they were finally left Harry found it difficult to select a suitable one for Jean. He wanted to give her something out of the common run, but as he felt that in view of the necessity for saving money toward housekeeping he must not spend more than \$10 his diffi-



"WELL, I CALL IT A SKIN GAME." culty was greatly increased. In order to help him out the jeweler gave him an il-Instrated catalogue and told him to select the design he wanted and he would send to the city for it. Harry acted on the suggestion and worked over that catalogue for almost a week. He marked at least 20 designs of pins, brooches, bracelets and such trinkets before he decided on a brooch that took his fancy. He then took a rubber and erased the marks he had made before designs he had rejected and then sent back the catalogue by a messenger with a note saying, "Get me what I have marked."

On the day before Christmas the jew eler sent him a package and with it a bill for \$20. Harry expected a bill for only \$10, so he opened the parcel to find out if possible what was the cause of the extra charge. He then found that, besides the brooch, the jeweler had sent him a bracelet he had admired very much and which he at first thought of ordering. But he didn't order it, and, besides, not being able to afford it, he had no intention of being imposed upon in this way. Taking the jewels with him, he hurried to the dealer and asked him to explain.

"Why, I sent you only what you order ed." protested the jeweler. "I ordered only the brooch," said Har-

"Pardon me." said the jeweler. "You sent me word to order what you had marked, and I did. You marked both the

brooch and the pin." "Oh, no; I didn't," replied Harry. "I rubbed out all the marks I made except

the one for the brooch." Instead of pursuing the argument the jeweler went to his desk and brought out the marked catalogue. Sure enough, the two items were marked. He had evidently overlooked the mark before the bracelet when erasing the others. "But I don't want the bracelet," he

"I can't help that," replied the jeweler. "You ordered it, and I simply filled your

"But you surely are not going to insist that I take it?" "There is nothing else left for me to do. The mistake was your own, and I can't be expected to bear the loss. The jewel is a very pretty one, but I could not hope to sell it here within a year, and I must

pay the New York house for it." "Well, I call that a skin game," said Harry, losing his temper. The jeweler promptly lost his temper also, and they indulged in a rather undignified quarrel. Finally Harry paid the bill and exclaimed as he did so:

"If I live in this town 50 years, I'll never buy another thing here."

"Well, I'll not be losing my best customer," replied the jeweler, with a sneer. When Harry reached his room, he took out the two jewels and looked at them. They were both very pretty and tasteful, but he felt that they were more than he

could afford just then. "Why," he said to himself, "I might as well have added \$30 more to the amount and bought her the engagement

Having the jewels, be decided, of

and asked her to explain, but much as course, that he must give them both to but the thoughtfulness that prompts she would have liked to warn him of Jean, even though she might think him them. the snare into which all her previous extravagant in spending so much on them when he was saving up for their home. for she had registered a vow to keep her While thinking the matter over it suddenly occurred to him that he could make things look more reasonable if he sent the brooch as a Christmas present and the bracelet as a birthday gift. That would justify them both. Replacing the jewels in their boxes with appropriate eards, he took them to the postoffice and unailed them so that she would get them the first thing in the morning.

When he went to Jean's home to have his Christmas dinner with her, he found her radiantly happy. The gloom that he was told always oppressed her on Christmas was nowhere in evidence. Her greeting to him was more affectionate than it had ever been before, and he felt that, besides wishing him a merry Christmas, she was doing all in her power to make it alone in the parlor after dinner, she said she wanted to thank him again for his Christmas present and birthday gift. There is only one way for lovers to express such thanks, and after a furtive glance toward the doors and windows it was so expressed. After the customary pause of happy silence Jean whispered as she hid her face on his bosom:

"I felt sure all along that you would pass the test all right. You are so noble and so generous. I loved you so much that I wanted to tell you all about it, but if I did there would be no test. I know it was silly, but I vowed once that I would test all my friends this way, as well as any one who made love to me, and you know it has given me the reputation of being odd."

"But what is the test?" asked Harry in surprise, at the same time rejoicing that he had passed it successfully.

"Can't you guess? No, no; you could never guess, for you are too thoughtful and generous ever to think of doing anything else than what you did."

Harry puffed out his chest and felt good while he waited for her to proceed. "You see, it is just like this: I was born on Christmas day, and superstitious people say that is what makes me different from every one else, but no one has other children had a birthday as well as Christmas every year, but I had to be satisfied with one day for both. Besides. I usually had to be satisfied with only one present. When I was a child, that used to make me feel cheated, and I brooded over it till I was morbidly sensitive on the point, but as I grew older it occurred to me that it gave me a chance to find out which of my friends were really thoughtful and cared for me very They were the ones who remembered my birthday and Christmas, just as you did, and the ones who beat me out of a present I just had very little more to do with. Of course it is not the presents I think so much about, but the thoughtfulness, though when I was younger the presents used to count too."

'And so that was what was at the bottom of all the endings of friendships that have happened with you every Christmas?" "Yes."

"And was it because Tom Harland did not think to give you a Christmas present and birthday gift that you broke off the engagement with him?"

"Don't let us speak about that crea ture." "But I want to speak about him. You



'I VALUE THE THOUGHTFULNESS THAT PROMPTS THEM.

the engagement with him. Surely, if you loved him, you didn't break off just because he was one present short." "I never loved him."

"But you were engaged to him." "Yes, but I didn't know then what love means. Even if he had passed my fool ish test I would still have parted from him, for I did not know my own mind when I consented to be engaged to him. "But it was at Christmas you broke off

with him. Wasn't that because of the "Well, yes, it was, but he failed in his requirements in a way that I had not previously dreamed possible. Why, that man actually brought me an engagement ring for Christmas, and it was to serve as an engagement ring. Christmas present and birthday gift all in one. That was beyond anything in the way of true economy that I had ever heard of, and it opened my eyes to the kind of man he was. But you must always remember, dear, that it is not the presents I value,

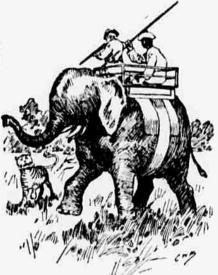
As Harry recalled his quarrel with the jeweler and his regret that he had not spent \$30 more and got an engagement ring, instead of the two presents, he didn't feel quite so proud of himself as he did at first, but he wisely concluded to accept the good that the gods had sent to him, and he let Jean praise him to her heart's content.

He felt, however, that something should be done in the way of atonement, so be went around to the jeweler's next day and, after apologizing profusely for the many unkind things he had said when they had quarreled, asked for a catalogue from which to select an engagement ring with a solitaire in it that he can order as soon as he has saved up enough money or secured the promotion to the position of manager that he is waiting for. Jean, of course, is very happy and thinks, after all, that it was not such a hardship to have been born on Christmas, as it enabled her to dis-cover what a noble, thoughtful and generous fellow her fiance is, and he, having had such a narrow escape, will doubtless be very careful to show the qualities for which he accidentally, though perhaps justly, gets credit.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA.

Ushered In by the Singing of Birds With Flowers In Profusion.

One can hardly conceive a finer climate than that of the northwestern provinces of India at the Christmastide. Rain sometimes falls at that time, and



A CHRISTMAS TREAT IN THE JUNGLE.

about Christmas and New Year's it is greatly desired for the crops, but ordinarily from week to week there is an unclouded sky. A cool, pleasant breeze blows from the west. In the house it is not only cool, but cold, so that a little sunning is pleasant, and at night, especially far up in the country, fires are welcome. Cool breezes during the day. sweet scented flowers, birds singing and rooks cawing in the trees add to the charms of India's most agreeable season. Then Europeans, so far as circumstances permit, get into the open air and move freely about, with everything in the climate to favor their traveling.

Europeans usually observe the festive season somewhat in the same way as we do in America, but a Christmas day in the tropics is a fact hard to realize. The scenes, climate and general surroundings are so very different from what we are used to here. Picnics, tennis, shooting parties on elephants and rides and drives through country avenues take the place of sleighing, skating and coasting.

There are Christmas decorations pecul iar to India, for the natives dearly love all tokens of feasting. They place tall plantain leaves and bunches of fruit in the gateway as symbols of plenty and hang up wreaths of laurel and India jasmine or strings of small lamps and of those great orange marigolds which they offer at the shrines of all their gods.

An attraction for the little folks is found in the great stands of Christmas cakes and trees. Ornamental cakes which are supposed to be especially dear to English hearts are made by the natives. The number of these that are presented on Christmas morning by native tradesmen to their employers is startling. As many as a dozen have been seen on one lady's table. Besides these, trays of all manners of candies, fruits, vegetables and flowers are presented, sometimes by the servants themselves, who come to make their salaams and generally expect to receive some Christmas backsheesh (money) or Christmas "boxes." princes and nabobs send presents of a like nature to their English friends. The contents of the trays are often most artistically arranged.

The churches are decorated, but what an uphenval of all one's cherished sentiments and memories! In the place of the holly and ivy, flowers of brilliant hues are seen; instead of furs and plaids, summer gowns and hats are worn; in the place of rosy, frost kissed cheeks, there

are pallid and sun bleached ones. The roast turkey and beef and blazing plum pudding are generally forthcoming, served by native waiters in their white raiment and bare feet. The festivities of the day are usually wound up by a dinner party in the evening. be held on the Lunetta, but owing to

C. B. ETHERINGTON.

YULETIDE IN MANILA.

HOW THE AMERICANS CELEBRATED CHRISTMAS IN 1898.

Religious Services in Camp and at the Churches-An Extra Good Dinner For the Eighth Army Corps. Friendly Filipinos Fensted High.

IRWIN, TENTH PENNSYLVANIA VOL-UNTERIOR



saw an American Christmas, and it is certain that the capital city of the Philippines celebrated its first American Christmas this year of our Lord 1898. It is also certain that, in spite of the difficulties, the day was rightly cele-

brated, for American soldiers, especially those engaged in this war, do not do things by halves. This first American Christmas celebration here in Manila will be long remembered by those who participated in the festivities of the day, and it will not be the last by many unless present indications belie themselves, for American customs are fast becoming implanted here.

While the men of the Eighth army orps, the army of occupation in Manila, had been looking forward to the Christmas season for a long time, it was not until a week before Christmas that the real preparations for the proper observation of the season in the army were taken. When on Thursday before Christmas the St. Paul came in and brought from the friends and relatives of the men at home so many kind remembrances, it was at once decided to have a big Christmas celebration. All kinds of presents were received in the mail, and nearly every man received a box of catables. At once preparations for a real Christmas observation were begun, and there was feasting throughout the army.

On Christmas day all business was the day. In the morning there were religious services held in the different commands by the chaplains, and these were largely attended by the soldiers. These | go, and were as happy as the rest. services recalled to the men the many things which they have to be thankful Although they have undergone all the trials and hardships of a campaign in the rainy season of this tropical climate, the death list has been very low, and the men have endured the hardships remarkably well.

Aside from the services held in the several commands of the army, there



FIGURES PANTASTICALLY DRESSED. was a special service held in the great Cathedral of San Ignatius for the soldiers of the American army. There was a grand solemn high mass, and Rev. Father McKinnin of the First California conducted the services. The great cathedral was crowded. There were profuse decorations for the occasion, and the great paintings and fine statuary, which since the surrender of the city have been stored away owing to the occupation of the church as barracks by the Spanish prisoners, were brought forth. There were services in the dif ferent other churches, and these were also attended by our soldiers.

The principal feature of the day, how ever, was the dinner, and every com mand had a change from the plain bill of fare provided by Uncle Sam to some thing more palatable and appetizing. It had been a long time since the men had partaken of a meal under something like civilized surroundings, and there were many things to make Christmas dinner enjoyable.

Christmas day here in the Philippines could not have been more perfect. The weather was fine. In the morning there were cooling breezes, and later the sun poured ts rays straight down. sentinels were kept busy in dodging the heat and hunting the shade. All duty not absolutely necessary was dispensed with for the day. There were all kinds of sports in the different commands. A great field day had been arranged to !

Hains In the trans the same and the Thirty and Hains will have the Thirty and Hains

t the unsettled state of affairs it was

The natives celebrated Christmas with many queer ceremonies, and with them the joyful Pasco Diaz was a great day. The Filipinos know how to enjoy a holiday as do no other people. They arve their holidays every week, but the greatest of all are Passa Dias and hely week. To the Filipinos Christmas was a week long, and there was another week of preliminary rejoicing. For more than a week before Christmas the early morn ing hours here in Manila were filled with music. Bands paraded the streets in the different parts of the city. The bells of the great cathedrals rang out their mellow monotones to awaken the people for

Music was one of the principal features connected with the native observance of the holiday season. There are few people more musically inclined than the Filipinos, and on all occasions music is a principal feature with the natives. They have all sorts of brass, string and reed instruments, and some of the latter are most rude contrivances. They make reed instruments from sections of bamboo, and these are of all sizes and consequently of all pitches. At the holiday season one has a chance to see more of the musical instinct than at any other senson of the year. All day Christmas these native bands played in the street. They lent their aid toward making the festivities of Christmas eve and Christmas night enjoyable. All through the holy week Manila was filled with music.

Christmas, or Pasco, as the Spanish is, had its good things for old and young. The children were at the height of their joy, for Juguetes, the Santa Claus of the Filipinos, came throughout the land and everywhere distributed good things. For a week before Christmas figures fantastically dressed to represent Juguetes were hauled through the streets on decorated carts. Everywhere these were followed by crowds of native chil-

When the people of the Philippines turn out to enjoy a holiday, they are clad in their best and airiest attire, and especially is this the case at Pasco season. Early on Christmas morning the streets were filled with natives of all ages and both sexes. The men were class in the customary crinine garment and suspended in Manila, and all observed the women in bright colored frocks, with an embroidered piece of pina around the neck. The little pickaninnies were dressed in tasty style, as Filipino styles

The natives all attended the church ceremonies, for with them, as with us, these are the real features of the day All through the boly week the church festivities continued and ended only with the advent of the new year.

With our soldiers the principal ques tion at Christmas time was as to going home, for all were thoroughly tired of soldiering in the tropics. The bright prospects for the speedy return of the volunteer forces was another cause of rejoicing and making merry. When another year has passed and another Christmas season is celebrated in Manila, this city and the Philippines will have been brought more fully under American influences and will have embarked upon a new era.

> Menu For Christmas Day. To feed were best at home; From thence the same to me is ceremony;

Meeting were bare without it. -Shakespeare. DINNER. Cream of Celery. Field. Fried Soles, Sauce Tartare. Mushrooms on Toast. Wild Turkey, Wild Plum Sauce. Quails in Purce of Chestnuts. BALAD.

Lettuce Salad with Small Balls of Cream Cheese HOT ENTREMET. Mince Pies. Plum Pudding in Burning Brandy. DESSERT. Pstache Ice Cream. White Cake. Brandied Fruit. Fruit and Coffee.

A Child's Query.



Lipon a fising train

And Santa brings them presents

To make them blithely hop. Doke he unto their stockings

Adown the smickestack pop? saddle termed" be said. "That shows be reen all to hites biling but the piece meanance of the breet." were I have to the out Tennes.